

PE1595/KK

Ken Miles Email of 20 January 2016

I write to support the Petition PE01595 lodged by Mr Alexander Taylor.

My name is Ken Miles I am a resident of Kinross for over 35 years, being consistently active throughout this time with issues in the Kinross community through my involvement with local voluntary organisations and committees.

I operated a business in the centre of Kinross for many years and have also continued to be involved in the hospitality business for around 20 years in Kinross.

I am writing with information regarding the recently completed £1.5 million Kinross High St shared space/shared surface scheme which has resulted in serious design failings leaving pedestrians exposed to danger from traffic.

The Kinross High St "improvements" have created many increased safety risks to pedestrians as the road remains the main route through the town for most vehicular traffic. Cars, heavy goods, including car transporters, buses, etc. still pass through the Kinross High Street.

As a result the shared space principle whereby pedestrians can own the road space on equal terms with traffic is not possible...unless you have a deathwish that is.

Perth and Kinross Council who implemented the scheme and are responsible for public safety appear to me to have failed to comply with their duty to the public and specifically their responsibilities under the Equalities Act.

My own own experiences and that of family and friends support the need for radical action to have the High Street returned to being made safe again as a matter of immediate priority.

Following the completed Kinross High Street works the following issues have been identified and reported widely in major articles in the national (Scottish Mail on Sunday 13th December 2015, regional press (Courier 4th January 2016) and elsewhere (including The Perthshire Advertiser and our local Kinross Newsletter).

One headline referred to the scheme in Kinross as "a return to a Third World Traffic System". I think this sums up the chaos introduced by shared space/shared surface schemes.

The removal of the controlled crossing outside the Kinross Day Centre (which provides food and hospitality for pensioners daily) has resulted in a lack of a safe crossing point for young children, the elderly and the disabled, including the blind.

In order to ensure a safe crossing and at great inconvenience to themselves and their care workers, young children from Rosemount Nursery 55 High St now have to walk, on a daily basis and in all weathers, to the only controlled crossing some extra 250 metres in the opposite direction from the Day Centre crossing that they had used for many years.

The "suggested" courtesy crossing areas (un-controlled, ie no traffic lights audible warnings, road markings etc) at the Co-op and elsewhere, which have no legal status and do not safeguard pedestrians are proving to be a great risk to users.

Traffic is not obliged to stop at these courtesy crossings resulting in daily risk to users, with cars passing in front of and behind pedestrians while they are in mid crossing. This has been my own experience too while attempting crossing with my disabled wife (We are both pensioners).

Reports have been made to the police about the speeding traffic and the alarm caused to pedestrians by inconsiderate drivers resulting in daily "near misses".

The removal of safety railings at the north side of the High Street/ Station Road junction is potentially exposing pedestrians to risk of injury. The railings had been in place for many years but have been taken away for no apparent or logical reason.

The "shared space" areas at the Salvation Hotel give/take and the large area outside the Old Kinross Town Hall are also putting pedestrians at risk of injury due to lack of any defined pavements due to "shared surface".

Despite the 20 mph speed zone being in place for over ten years most traffic is exceeding this limit, creating risk of injury or death to pedestrians.

Statistics produced by Perth and Kinross Council confirm that traffic has been monitored and recorded at speeds in excess of 45 mph in this 20 mph zone.

A petition is under way to require the re-instatement of a controlled crossing in the High Street, at or near the position of the former crossing and also ask Perth and Kinross Council to address the many other serious safety issues that this new shared space/shared surface scheme has produced.

The scheme in Kinross has failed to deliver benefits to the community, economic or otherwise.

Indeed the protracted works schedule and closures of Kinross High Street for over six months has made some businesses relocate, others close and created hardship and financial loss for most.

Even more importantly the scheme as delivered is simply unsafe and not fit for purpose.

£1.5 million has been spent to create a cosmetic facelift to the Kinross High Street. This has been at the expense of safety.

Lives are being put at risk daily as a result of this latest town planning futility, fixation and vanity.

As a result of the failure of the scheme as in place in Kinross and what I know of other such schemes across the UK I wish to support the call for a moratorium on all further proposed schemes and a halt to those proposed at Kirkintilloch and elsewhere.

I would urge the Scottish Parliament to listen to our experience here in Kinross as evidence of the misguided application of shared space/shared surface schemes.

I would be happy to offer further evidence in relation to this issue and give consent to have my submission posted on the Parliamentary website.

Many thanks

Ken Miles